

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2099

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONCUL FRANKFURT

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN NEW YORK 1063

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 7417

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, BE

SUBJECT: INFLUX OF EX-SOVIET JEWS INTO BELGIUM FROM ISRAEL

REF: BRUSSELS 7289

1. AS PROMISED PARA 4 REFTTEL, WE PASSED INFORMATION PROVIDED STATE 206318 TO FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CHANCELLERY RENE FOURDIN SEPTEMBER 23. HE AND HIS STAFF HAD RECEIVED COMPLETELY GARBLED AND HIGHLY WORRISOME VERSION OF ALLEGED FUNDING CUTOFF FROM LOCAL VOLUNTARY AGENCY REPS. WE ASSURED BELGIANS THERE HAD BEEN NO CUTOFF OF FUNDING TO DATE AND PROVIDED FURTHER AMPLICATION AFTER TELECON WITH JAMES CARLIN AT USMISSION GENEVA. WE MADE POINT THAT INS FRANKFURT HAD RECEIVED ONLY 18 APPLICATIONS FOR REFUGEE STATUS FROM VOLUNTARY AGENCIES IN BELGIUM AS OF SEPTEMBER 23 FOR LATEST GROUP IN QUESTION (PER OUR TELECON TO INS FRANKFURT JUST PRIOR TO MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS). FINALLY, WE PROVIDED DETAILED EXPLANATION OF HOW US REFUGE PROGRAM
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WORKED. ALL OF FOREGOING WAS NEW TO BELGIANS AND GREATLY

APPRECIATED.

2. IT APPARENT THAT ISSUE IN BELGIUM TAKING ON MAJOR PROPORTIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER AND JUSTICE MINISTER HAVE DISCUSSED IT PERSONALLY AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS SURE THAT QUESTION WILL BE RAISED WHEN PARLIAMENT RECONVENES OCTOBER 8. IN MEANTIME, BELGAIN GOVERNMENT JUST BEGINNING TO ADDRESS ISSUE. AS OF OUR MEETINGS BELGIANS HAD NO IDEA HOW MANY PERSONS INVOLVED, WHAT PAPERS THOSE CARRIED WHICH WOULD DETERMINE THEIR STATUS, HOW MANY WERE WITHOUT FUNDS, HOW MANY WANTED TO STAY IN BELGIUM OR GO ELSEWHERE, HOW MANY STILL ARRIVING IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, OR WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE HERE WHOSE THREE MONTHS' PERMIT TO STAY EITHER HAD OR WOULD EXPIRE SHORTLY.

3. BELGIANS NOTED THAT IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TO PERMIT THESE OR FUTURE EX-SOVIET JEWS TO REMAIN IN BELGIUM PERMANETLY, THAT THEY HAD INFO THAT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WAS ISSUING PASSPORTS (RATHER THAN LAISSEZ PASSERS) TO EX-SOVIET JEWS WHO NOT QUALIFIED FOR SUCH UNDER ISRAELI LAW BY RESIDIN IN ISRAEL FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR, AND THAT THEY LEANED TOWARDS PERMITTING THOSE WHO MIGHT QUALIFY FOR REFUGEE STATUS UNDER US REFUGEE PROGRAM TO REMAIN BEYOND THREE MONTHS PERIOD AUTHORIZED UNDER BELGIAN LAW UNTIL US COULD MAKE FINAL DETERMINATION IN THEIR CASES. BELGIANS SAID THAT THEY WOULD CONTACT VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO GET FURTHER INFO AND URGE THEM SPEEDILY TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS OF THOSE WHO SOUGHT ONWARD MOVEMENT.

4. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT US-BELGIAN ISSUE (REPORTED REFTTEL) HAS BEEN MUTED BY EXPRESSING OUR CONCERN ALONG WITH EXPLANATION OF WHAT WE COULD AND COULD NOT DO. WOULD APPRECIATE INFO FROM ADDRESSEE POSTS AS AVAILABLE THAT COULD HELP BELGIAN OFFICIALS AS THEY BEGIN TO ADDRESS QUESTION. FIRESTONE

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